

TESTIMONY Re: HB 6616-Husky for Immigrants

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My name is Caprice Taylor Mendez.

I am testifying in favor of HB 6616 - Husky for Immigrants. I am a stage 3 Colon Cancer survivor in 2017. Without timely access to the four physicians, including my annual primary care visit, I would not have lived beyond the projected 18 month death to stage four cancer. My gastro surgeon predicted it could have happened at any moment. I am alive today because I was lucky enough to have received my US Citizenship through the Republican led Amnesty Bill in the 1980's, which allowed for me to have health insurance

I was raised in Connecticut at 5 years of age. I have dedicated 30 plus years of my life to be in service of the greater good. I recently hit 50 years of age because I have had access to affordable and quality health insurance and care. I graduated from higher education. I still have the student loans to prove it. As luck has been on my side, my family and I survived the major earthquake that demolished entire towns and took the lives of over 20 thousand people in 1976 Guatemala. My family, mother and father as former teachers, also survived the killing of school teachers by Guatemalan - US supported -paramilitary, according to President Clinton in the NY Times, and Boston Globe. To teach low income indigenous children how to read and write in the 60's through the late 1990's was viewed as working against the government. It is easier to control illiterate populations for the benefit of the United Fruit Company - Chiquita Banana and Dole - as noted in the Time Magazine issue of "The Banana Wars" in Latin America. My uncle's wife is the sole survivor from her graduating class of elementary school teachers in Guatemala. She, as well as my family and I, survived because we moved to the United States of America.

My father paid income taxes on his several jobs. He rarely slept. He rarely filed for a tax refund. The State of Connecticut has over \$1.4 billion in "unclaimed property and tax refunds" - including from nonUS Citizens who pay taxes but do not claim the refund. At my age, if my father had cancer and died undocumented, five children would have become the wardens of the State. Taxpayers pay more not less when undocumented adults lack adequate healthcare. We should not, as human beings, depend on this level of LUCK to be alive, to have access to preventive care, to not worry about losing our home or jobs due to not being able to afford care and prevent what is often preventable deaths.

We are hurting our collective economic growth and potential by not investing in our collective well being that includes all humans. The latest pandemic should make us all stop and think of the health and well being of the person who is greeting you, cleaning the Hospital or office floors, bagging your food or taking care of your children. A virus is not asking for immigration status. If the parents lack access to a doctor, when will we find out that they have an illness that can spread through a cough or simply breathing a droplet? This is not fiction but real life. As a public official, please note that the US foreign policies have committed crimes against humanity in Latin America in support of corporate one percenters holding Stocks and members of corporate Boards. People who care about their families have faced natural disasters and man-made/ corporate made disasters and have come here as victims of crimes against humanity and not as criminals. More immigrants, by police statistics across the Country including Connecticut, are victims of crimes rather than perpetrators. Let us see the value in all humans.

Let's change the script to one where we work together to create a kinder world where there is a win/ win and one of collaboration. Without health, we have nothing. Let us all live in the abundance of quality and affordable health care. It is not a mere dream but one that other civilized nations have had for decades such as France, Germany, and Portugal. Access to preventive care saves everyone money, and it is the only morally correct thing to do. Today, you get to choose if you stand with corporate board members' profits or humanity and the financial well being of everyday folks.

Thank You for Your Attention.

Caprice